

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 14296 090947Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----026827 091001Z /21  
P 090909Z SEP 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4956

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 14296

EXDIS

FOR HOLBROOKE

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MARR, RP, US  
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF MILITARY BASES WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY  
  
REF: MANILA 14192

1. AT LUNCH SEPTEMBER 9 SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ROMULO TOOK ME ASIDE AND SAID THAT PRESIDENT MARCOS HAD MENTIONED TO HIM THE SATISFACTORY PRELIMINARY TALK WITH ME SEPTEMBER 8 CONCERNING THE U.S. MILITARY RULES. ROMULO STRESSED THE POINT MADE BY MARCOS THAT HE IS COMMITTED TO RETURNING TO POLITICAL NORMALCY AND WISHES TO HAVE THE REVISED BASES AGREEMENT OUT OF THE WAY BEFORE DIFFICULTIES CAN ARISE CONCERNING IT WITH, AS ROMULO PUT IT, " THE NEW ASSEMBLY."

2. I NOTED THAT WE ALSO COULD FACE PROBLEMS WITH OUR "ASSEMBLY" CONCERNING ANY NEW AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR INCREASED MILITARY SUPPLY. IN THIS REGARD, I CITED OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE TURKISH AGREEMENT, WITH WHICH ROMULO WAS FAMILIAR, A NUMBER OF CURRENT ISSUES SUCH AS THE GROUND TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM KOREA, PANAMA CANAL AND TAIWAN, AS WELL AS EXECUTIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL POSITIONS ON ARMS TRANSFERS AND HUMAN  
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RIGHTS.

3. ROMULO ACKNOWLEDGED THESE UNCERTAINTIES ON THE U.S. POLITICAL SCENE, BUT SAID THAT NONETHELESS IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO WRAP UP AN AGREEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AT LEAST ON THE PHILIPPINE SIDE. I ASKED ABOUT THE TIMETABLE FOR NORMALCY AND ROMULO SAID THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO MOVE

AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE TO LIFT MARTIAL LAW TOTALLY DESPITE  
OPPOSITION IN THE CABINET AND COUNTRY FROM PEOPLE, AMONG  
WHOM ROMULO INCLUDED HIMSELF, WHO FEAR A RETURN OF THE OLD  
SOCIETY. I GAVE MY IMPRESSION BASED ON RECENT SPEECHES  
BY MARCOS AND MY OWN OBSERVATION THAT MARCOS SEEMS INCLINED  
TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY AND GRADUALLY TOWARD LIFTING MARTIAL LAW,  
RESERVING THE RIGHT TO REINSTATE MARTIAL LAW AT ANY POINT  
AND, IN ANY EVENT, CONDITIONING CHANGE UPON A SETTLEMENT  
OF THE MUSLIM INSURRECTION IN THE SOUTH. ALL THIS SEEMED  
TO ME TO ENVISAGE A PROTRACTED PROCESS; WHAT DID HE THINK?  
ROMULO REPLIED, " PERHAPS NOT THIS YEAR, BUT NEXT."

4. WHEN I ASKED IF ROMULO REALLY ANTICIPATED THE PROSPECT  
OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION TO THE BASES, HE REPLIED STRONGLY  
IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, NOTED THAT "RADICAL ELEMENTS,"E.G.,  
AQUINO, HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AGAINST THE BASES, AND LAUNCHED  
INTO A LENGTHY EXPOSITION ON THE DANGERS OF A REVERSION  
TO THE INDISCIPLINE AND DISORDER OF THE OLD SOCIETY.

5. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE THE TRUE LEVEL  
OF CONCERN REGARDING ANY POSSIBILITY OF EFFECTIVE POLITICAL  
OPPOSITION HERE TO A NEW BASES AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, THE  
CONCLUSION IS INESCAPABLE THAT ROMULO AS WELL AS MARCOS  
MAY BE EXAGGERATING THE PROSPECT WITH A VIEW TO ITS  
UTILITY IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH US. CERTAINLY, THIS SEEMS  
TO BE THE CASE AS REGARDS ROMULO'S TIMETABLE FOR A RETURN  
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TO NORMALCY. ACCORDINGLY, I SUSPECT THAT THE GOP, LONG  
SUBJECT TO OUR CAVEATS CONCERNING THE CONSTRAINT OF  
AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES, MAY HAVE DECIDED TO  
POINT UP AND MAKE THE MOST OF WHATEVER SIMILAR ARGUMENT  
CAN BE GENERATED ON THE PHILIPPINE SIDE.

6. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS TO APPROPRIATE MILITARY  
ADDRESSEES.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
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**Review Markings:**  
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